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New York

President:	Ms. Murmokaitė	(Lithuania)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Ms. King
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Errázuriz
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mr. Sarki
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Oh Joon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Tatham
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

Briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

The President: Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Didier Burkhalter, Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and President of the Swiss Confederation, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Burkhalter.

Mr. Burkhalter (*spoke in French*): It is a great honour for me and for my country, Switzerland, to address the Council today as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). I thank the Council for its invitation.

Switzerland has embraced its chairmanship of the OSCE with great determination and modesty, realizing full well that security is an art, and a difficult and fragile one, as the events in Ukraine are demonstrating once again — indeed, I shall dwell on that topic for longer that I had intended, as things there have now moved into a new phase.

Switzerland decided to assume the chairmanship of the OSCE for strategic reasons. We view the promotion of stability in Europe and its neighbouring regions, as well as in the fragile regions of the world, as a major axis of our new foreign affairs policy. We also believe that our tradition of mediation and good offices can add an enriching contribution to the OSCE.

We wish to contribute on the international front in order to demonstrate our responsibility and solidarity, which are two of the underlying principles of Switzerland's policy of peace and security.

With regard to the United Nations, our policy is also reflected in our decision to seek membership in the Security Council for the period 2023-2024, as well as in our OSCE chairmanship for a second time — Switzerland being the first country to do so.

This is also the first time in the history of the OSCE that two countries holding the chairmanship for a second time cooperate so closely — Switzerland this year and Serbia in 2015. We have together developed a joint work plan and we hope that this consecutive chairmanship will guarantee more continuity in the work of the OSCE. Moreover, we think that this continuity model should be instructive for the future.

It is therefore with particular pleasure that I address the Council under Lithuanian chairmanship, given that it was your Government, Madam President, that facilitated that innovative type of presidency at the Vilnius Ministerial Conference in 2011. Today, I will outline the priorities of our presidency by setting them off against the backdrop of the cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations. As chairperson-in-office, I want to strengthen that cooperation. I will also talk about the role the OSCE plays in international efforts to manage the crisis in Ukraine. That topic has strongly marked the initial phase of the Swiss chairmanship of the OSCE.

As the Council is aware, the OSCE is the largest regional security organization. It covers both the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions. It brings together 57 countries, from Vancouver to Vladivostok, as well as 11 partners, all the way to Australia. It takes its decisions by consensus. That is both a strength and, at times, a weakness, as we must constantly reach compromise in order to act. That is the spirit of cooperation that is at the heart of all the activities of the OSCE.

That spirit of cooperation is also reflected in relations with the outside. The work of the OSCE, as a regional organization under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, contributes to the efforts of the United Nations to maintain and re-establish peace, security and international stability.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently relaunched the debate on the revitalization of the role of regional organizations under Chapter VIII. We will organize a conference on that very subject in Vienna on 27 and 28 May, at which representatives from the United Nations and several regional organizations will participate.

The concept of multidimensional security that the OSCE has developed could inspire other regional actors. The Helsinki Final Act of 1975 recognized for the first time that threats to stability and security not only came from troops and weapons but also — without reference

to any hierarchy — from economic crises, environmental degradation and human rights violations. Today, that comprehensive security model is more relevant than ever because it provides effective responses to current challenges and the security needs of the individual. We therefore hope to strengthen cooperation between the OSCE and other regional security organizations and the United Nations, always in line with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter.

The cooperation between the OSCE and the Council of Europe is an example at the regional level. One week ago, the Austrian presidency of the Council of Europe and the Swiss chairmanship of the OSCE jointly organized a conference aimed at strengthening institutional cooperation between the two organizations in the fight against trafficking in human beings. The conference was a success. A framework identifying concrete measures was developed that, among other things, provides for developing joint training to improve criminal prosecution.

With regard to relations between the OSCE and the United Nations, further cooperation should be envisaged on the ground. A successful example is undoubtedly the work carried out in Kosovo by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and the OSCE Mission.

Within the OSCE, we have launched a process of reflection with regard to further improving the efficiency of our field missions. The OSCE and its four specialized agencies carry out 16 missions — from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Kyrgyzstan — with a relatively modest annual budget of €145 million. To give an example, that is 15 times smaller than the amount that Switzerland devotes to internaitonal cooperation. We would like to introduce a new mission model that better corresponds to the specific needs of each host country. At the same time, we should ensure that we preserve the crucial preventive role played by our missions and that we safeguard the identity of the OSCE as a field organization that supports host countries in the implementation of the commitments made at the organization.

We could also consider other joint actions under Chapter VIII of the Charter — for example, in the area of training. Two years ago, we organized a course on conflict prevention for employees of the United Nations, the European Union (EU) and the OSCE. That format should be reactivated and serve as a model. We are prepared to devote ourselves to that task.

On elections, there is close cooperation between the United Nation and regional organizations and, as in the case of Georgia and Afghanistan, efforts are complementary. The OSCE will support the presidential elections to be held in Afghanistan in April 2014. Afghanistan is one of the OSCE's six partner cooperating countries in the Asian region. That will be the fifth time that the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the OSCE will monitor elections in Afghanistan.

I should briefly like to expand upon an idea concerning the Asia-Pacific region. Next year, Switzerland will assume the chairmanship of the Partners for Cooperation in Asia forum, where we hope to discuss how to implement elements of an OSCE integrated and cooperative security model in East Asia. In the context of ongoing territorial disputes, rapidly increasing defence budgets and the increased risk of tensions and political polarization, East Asia could benefit from the experience of the OSCE on the establishment confidence-building measures and common standards through dialogue and transparency. The Asia-Pacific region is an engine for economic integration, and that may serve as a model when it comes to integration on the security front.

(*spoke in English*)

Since assuming the chairmanship of the OSCE at the beginning of 2014, my agenda has been dominated by the political crisis and recent escalation of violence in Ukraine. The outbreaks of violence in the context of the struggle about the future course of Ukraine and the high degree of instability the country has recently faced are a sobering reminder that security in Europe cannot be taken for granted. Those developments have revealed the need to foster dialogue, re-establish trust and rebuild bridges, both within Ukraine and across the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions. It is my firm conviction that the OSCE has a major role to play on both counts.

During recent weeks, I have repeatedly called upon all sides to refrain from violence, resolve the crisis through dialogue and political means and respect human rights. In a series of meetings, I have discussed options for OSCE assistance with the then-Ukrainian Government as well as with members of the opposition.

The agreement reached on 21 February marked an important step towards ending the violence and paved the way for a political solution to the crisis.

I congratulate everyone involved who made that breakthrough possible, including the Polish, German and French Foreign Ministers and the Special Envoy of the Russian Federation.

With the appointment of an interim President by the Parliament, Ukraine has now entered a new phase of transition. Formidable challenges lie ahead. We should unite in our efforts to support Ukraine in these difficult times. A stable, democratic and united Ukraine is in the interest of us all. I therefore propose establishing an international contact group on Ukraine. Ukraine should of course play a prominent role in the group, and the key international actors should be included. We are currently consulting on that idea with all actors involved. The main task of the proposed group would be to support Ukraine in this transition period. The contact group would serve as a platform for coordination and the sharing of information on international assistance and project activities in Ukraine. Through its impartiality and inclusivity, the OSCE has the necessary attributes to host and moderate the group. Ukraine and all international actors involved in the crisis are in fact participating States of the OSCE.

I have decided today to appoint Ambassador Tim Guldimann as my personal envoy on Ukraine. He will coordinate all ongoing and planned OSCE activities in Ukraine on behalf of the chairmanship. He will quickly start consultations with all sides and will cooperate closely with international partners.

A small OSCE core team has been sent to Ukraine to conduct a needs-assessment mission in the next few days. There is an urgent need to rebuild trust among all the parties involved. I encourage the new leaders of Ukraine to invite the ODIHR to send a human rights assessment mission to the country to establish the facts and circumstances of the incidents that took place in Ukraine. A human rights assessment mission would recommend measures to deal with serious violations of human rights allegedly committed during the crisis. Its findings would be presented in a report and would help advance national reconciliation in Ukraine.

Presidential elections will be a crucial moment in the current transition period. We expect the Ukrainian authorities to issue an early invitation for an ODIHR election observation mission. In view of the rapidly changing developments, we are also ready to review and further specify the activities of the OSCE project coordinator's office in Kiev.

We are currently witnessing a phase of de-escalation in Ukraine. It is essential to support a fair and inclusive process of transition that does not marginalize any part of Ukraine or any community. Ukraine deserves full international attention and support. I am convinced that the OSCE has the necessary tools to assist Ukraine in this difficult phase.

I will now turn to the priorities of the Swiss OSCE chairmanship. As the Council can see on the outline distributed this morning, we would like to contribute three main objectives, that is, fostering security and stability, improving people's lives and strengthening the OSCE capacity to act. Those three objectives embody three values — security, freedom and responsibility. For each of those main objectives, we have defined three to four priority areas. The Council will find information on the priority areas in the fact sheets provided. I am going to focus on some of them in this discussion with my following comments.

With regard to our first objective of fostering security and stability, I will limit myself to our geographical priorities, namely, the Western Balkans and the Southern Caucasus. I will also briefly mention the situation in Transdniestria.

In the Western Balkans, we want to make progress on regional cooperation and assist people to overcome the difficulties of the past — the reconciliation. A specific field of cooperation we wish to support concerns the issue of missing persons. We also intend to launch a process on migratory challenges, which should lead to the development of a regional strategy with the Regional Cooperation Council and in close consultation with the European Union.

The violent recent protests in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the resignation of several political leaders there have reminded us of the difficult political, economic and social context in that country and the prevailing risk of instability. Our mission on the ground is working closely with the European Union Force and the EU delegation to help improve the situation. The OSCE field presence is ready to offer its good offices and to facilitate dialogue in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is well positioned to do so, as it has managed to build up trust over the years both with cantonal and federal authorities and with representatives of civil society. My Special Representative has called on the authorities to engage in immediate dialogue with the citizens.

We will also contribute to normalizing the situation in northern Kosovo. The OSCE is not only organizing elections there, but it also aims to help create a democratic environment, restore confidence and encourage the political participation of minorities, again in close cooperation with the European Union.

As for our second geographical priority, Switzerland is looking for ways to build on its long-term involvement in the Southern Caucasus to help resolve the protracted conflicts in that region.

In Georgia, the OSCE is working closely with the United Nations and the EU in the context of the Geneva international discussions. The Swiss chairmanship will support that format as much as possible. We stand ready to revive discussions on an international presence in Georgia if that is in line with what Georgia wants and if all the parties involved demonstrate a degree of openness and flexibility on the issue. The Geneva discussions should move towards a real format for a settlement of the crisis.

Concerning the conflict in Nagorno Karabakh, the Swiss chairmanship will maintain and support the established formats for conflict settlement, primarily the Minsk Group, co-chaired by the United States, Russia and France. The conflict deserves particular attention at this stage, as tensions have been rising lately with several violent incidents.

I also consider it important to draw the Council's attention to the difficult situation in Transdniestria and throughout Moldova. Alongside Russia and Ukraine, the OSCE has been mandated to act as a joint mediator in the Transdniestrian settlement process since 1993. There are indications that we may be entering a period of growing tensions in the conflict. I ask all the parties involved to act with caution and to refrain from making unilateral moves. More than ever, it is essential that the international community act in a coordinated manner.

Our second objective aims at improving people's lives. It is important for the OSCE to act not only in the interest of States but also of their citizens. All good politics is in the service of the people, by the people and for the people. That notion also lies behind our leitmotiv for our chairmanship in 2014, which is to create a security community for the benefit of everyone.

The Swiss chairmanship is convinced that reinforcing cooperation between regional and global organizations in promoting and protecting human rights, democracy and the rule of law would significantly increase the impact of our work. Regional organizations need to play a leading role in implementing on the ground the commitments undertaken in the context of the United Nations.

That is precisely why we have decided to focus our efforts on better implementation. International instruments for human rights, democracy and the rule of law, as well as conventions and political commitments, can help improve people's lives only if their implementation is accepted and promoted by States at the national level. Organizations like the United Nations and the OSCE should do everything possible to support States in those efforts. Our focus is therefore on implementing the current commitments and not on developing new ones.

One particular aspect worth mentioning in that regard is our focus on the prevention of torture. A chairmanship event on the issue will bring together the United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degradeing treatment or punishment, Mr. Juan E. Méndez, and experts from civil society and other multilateral and national agencies involved in torture prevention. There will also be a sequence of regional workshops with a view to increasing the involvement of civil society across the OSCE.

The Swiss chairmanship undertakes such initiatives with a view to encouraging the implementation of international commitments throughout the OSCE, beginning with those contained in the basic documents, namely, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and its Optional Protocol. The Optional Protocol, which has not yet been ratified by all participating States, is a fundamental instrument in combating torture in all its forms.

Next is the topic of climate change and security. As a consequence of climate change, the number of natural disasters is increasing. Those disasters put the lives of many individuals at risk. That is why we have decided to make better prevention, mitigation and management of natural disasters a priority of our chairmanship. Promoting know-how and fostering cooperation on such issues will help to improve the safety conditions for people who live in the OSCE area and beyond.

We are working on that in close cooperation with specialized United Nations agencies, such as the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. By doing

so, we also seek to contribute to the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction of March 2015, held in Sendai, Japan. Moreover, we are committed to firmly embedding the topic in the United Nations sustainable development goals, also for 2015.

Within the field of combating transnational threats, the fight against terrorism is a key concern. Kidnapping for ransom is a major source of funding for terrorist groups and organizations. They use those funds to increase their operational capacity and to carry out terrorist attacks. While they release upon payment, they are in fact setting up new victims.

We should all find a common response to such a challenge. That is why the Swiss chairmanship welcomes resolution 2133 (2014), of 27 January. The resolution invites Member States to continue holding expert discussions within the United Nations and other competent international or regional organizations. Switzerland supports that line very clearly and the OSCE will contribute to such discussions. Kidnapping for ransom will be the subject of several OSCE debates, notably within the Security Committee and at a conference on counter-terrorism in Switzerland at the end of April.

At that conference, we will also address the issue of foreign fighters. Over the past few years, an increasing number of citizens from OSCE participating States have joined armed groups outside the OSCE area and have participated in violent conflicts. Syria is just one particularly prominent example with many such foreign fighters. There are also other examples, such as the Horn of Africa.

Once those people return, they often stay in touch with extremists and terrorists, which means a heightened risk of terrorist attacks for their home countries. We therefore need to discuss how we can prevent such people from being recruited and departing to those conflict areas. But we also need to reflect on how to reintegrate returnees from such conflicts into our societies.

Concerning our third and last main objective of strengthening the OSCE's capacity to act, I wish to draw the Council's attention to the OSCE's current reform process, called "Helsinki+40". The idea behind the process is to adapt the OSCE to the changing security needs, to address governance issues and to redefine the organization's approaches. The United Nations underwent a similar process in 2005, which resulted in the adoption of the World Summit Outcome document. As for the Helsinki+40 process, we are attempting to get a clear idea of where the OSCE is heading by 2015, 40 years after the signing of the Helsinki Final Act.

Within the framework of that reform process, we seek to strengthen the OSCE's mediation capacities. During our Swiss chairmanship, we would like to put Switzerland's particular expertise in the field of mediation to the benefit of the organization. Our goal is to create a unit within the OSCE that is highly specialized in mediation and dialogue facilitation. It is absolutely essential for an organization that must be able to build bridges in all situations, particularly between the East and the West.

The initial results are encouraging. We would like to thank the United Nations, more specifically the Mediation Support Unit, for sharing its knowledge, for participating in an expert exchange and for co-organizing a training session.

In that context, I welcome the recent establishment of a United Nations-OSCE mediation partnership framework between our Conflict Prevention Centre and the United Nations Policy and Mediation Division. I hope that the joint framework will lead to numerous concrete activities in the field of mediation.

Lastly, we would also like to enhance exchanges with representatives of civil society during our chairmanship. In particular, we would like to give young people a voice. We are organizing a model OSCE, where youth ambassadors from all participating States will jointly develop a youth action plan similar to the Global Model United Nations and the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth. They have already started their work, in mid-January in Vienna. We strongly hope that their plan will inspire the OSCE Ministerial Council to adopt a youth action plan of its own and to provide young people with an institutionalized role within the OSCE.

I have highlighted numerous opportunities for closer cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE. We are eager to intensify the dialogue between our organizations. My hope is that we will succeed in translating many ideas for further cooperation into successful projects.

The President: I thank Mr. Burkhalter for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Chairperson-in-office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for his briefing, in which he not only reviewed the activities of the organization that he is chairing but also notes the priorities of his country's chairmanship. We also thank the Lithuanian presidency, which again brings us together to discuss the ever-important topic of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations.

As we pointed out in the Council, for Chile collective action is essential in order to deal with long-standing and emerging threats. Such action is strengthened through the involvement of regional and subregional bodies. That is the sense in which my country understands Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, which leads us to promote active multilateralism with an effective capacity to incorporate the contribution of regional and subregional organizations, always subject to coordination by the United Nations.

Chile wishes to commend the substantial contribution that the OSCE has made to maintaining international peace and security, putting into practice in Europe and beyond the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter with regard to cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations. In that context, we welcome the announcement of the Chairperson-in-office with regard to the holding of a conference in May to review the role of regional organizations in accordance with Chapter VIII, in line with the repositioning of the issue made by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The OSCE originated from the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, first held in Helsinki in 1975, when the possibility of a nuclear holocaust was not a theoretical exercise, as the preamble to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons warns. The organiziation made it possible to strengthen trust, an essential prerequisite in order to prevent conflict and address the security dilemma.

One of the lessons of the long crisis that led to the First World War, of which we will commemorate the one-hundredth anniversary this year, is the pernicious effect of arms races. In fact, one of the most emblematic results of the OSCE is the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, which is the kind of approach to that issue that best serves the interests of global security.

The OSCE has played an important role in bringing people together through dialogue, even in the difficult times during the Cold War. The expansion in the number of its States members and its partners in the Mediterranean and Asia shows the importance of the bridges of understanding that it has built and of its holistic view of security. That view includes not only the issue of defence, but also, and primarily, development, the environment and human welfare. The inclusiveness and diversity of its 57 States members is a reflection of that.

The three pillars of the United Nations — peace and security, human rights and development — are indivisible and mutually reinforcing. Fragility in one of them inevitably affects the other two. That holistic view should guide us in this universal Organization and in regional and subregional organizations.

One point I wish to emphasize is the importance of conflict prevention and early-warning systems. That is a central issue, and one that complements the OSCE principles in the context of a comprehensive approach to security that goes beyond military and national perspectives to a multidimensional approach capable of meeting the current challenges of the international system.

I would also emphasize the importance of establishing cooperative ties in the field of prevention, mainly through education and the establishment or strengthening of networks.

The OSCE has effectively addressed a varied agenda that is, by and large, in line with the three pillars of the United Nations. In this second decade of the twenty-first century, it would be risky to restrict the security agenda to the military dimension of global politics. Security is achieved by addressing issues of development, the environment, an expanding and strengtheing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, including minority rights, the dialogue between civilizations and the fight against terrorism. The OSCE is making an important contribution in that regard, one that has made the human security paradigm an operational concept.

Once again, we reiterate to the Council the relevance, through the use of complementarity and of comparative advantages, of regional and subregional

organizations in the work of the United Nations on international peace and security.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation, on the assumption of the position of Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for 2014. We are very grateful for his personal briefing today on the priorities of the OSCE under his chairmanship.

The OSCE's approach to security is exemplary among the efforts to address today's growing security challenges, which are becoming more complex and multifaceted. The Republic of Korea appreciates and supports the OSCE's unique role in that regard. In particular, we take note of the fact that the OSCE is taking meaningful steps to deal with transnational and emerging threats, such as terrorism, drug trafficking and challenges to cybersecurity.

Having hosted the Seoul Conference on Cyberspace in October 2013, the Republic of Korea pays special attention to the OSCE's adoption of the initial set of confidence-building measures to reduce the risks of conflict stemming from the use of information and communication technology. We believe that kind of initiative will provide timely momentum to regional cooperation to counter new forms of threats.

The Republic of Korea also welcomes the "Helsinki+40" process, which aims at rebuilding confidence measures in terms of responding to regional challenges, which is very much in line with the work of the Council. In that vein, we support the OSCE's commitment to advancing reconciliation in the Western Balkans, resolving the protracted conflict in the Southern Caucasus and Transnistria, and dealing with the emerging crisis in Ukraine, as explained by the Chairperson-in-Office.

Another area we would like to mention is the OSCE's continued effort to promote the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), regarding the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Republic of Korea, as the current Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), highly values the OSCE's efforts to enhance cooperation with the Security Council in that area.

Central Asia and Afghanistan are another region of shared concern between the United Nations and the OSCE. It is commendable that the OSCE has contributed to the promotion of security in that region, as shown by the decision to send an elections support team to Afghanistan for the presidential and provincial council elections coming up in April. We expect the OSCE to continue to support Afghanistan and Central Asia with its vast experience in confidence-building, the prevention of conflict and rehabilitation after conflict.

Overall, we would like to reaffirm our support for the enhanced role of the OSCE as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. As a strong partner of the United Nations in promoting international peace and security, we look forward to closer cooperation between the OSCE and the Council.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to wish a warm welcome to the Security Council to His Excellency Mr. Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. I thank him for his very clear briefing on his priorities as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for 2014.

I will begin my remarks with a subject that the Chairperson-in-Office mentioned and that concerns us all, namely, Ukraine. We were shocked last week by the escalation of violence in several Ukrainian cities, which caused dozens of deaths and numerous injuries. In Ukraine, as in other participating States, it is essential that the commitments under the OSCE framework be fully respected and implemented. Those responsible for violence must be held accountable for their actions.

We welcome the efforts made by the international community to stop the violence and find a peaceful and negotiated end to the crisis. We call on all political forces to show restraint and pursue dialogue. The unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine must be preserved. A lasting political solution to the crisis requires the formation of a new inclusive Government, constitutional reform and the holding of democratic, free and impartial elections.

The OSCE's contribution will be important in supporting that political solution. The Chairperson-in-Office has given us a glimpse of the shape that that contribution could take, in close cooperation with the European Union, the Council of Europe and other partners. We believe that in Ukraine, the OSCE will once again be able to play its role as a bridge between

the East and the West in order to promote peace, democracy and stability.

As a member of the OSCE, Luxembourg fully supports the priorities of the Swiss chairmanship. We appreciate the close coordination of its priorities with those of Serbia, which will assume the OSCE chairmanship in 2015, and its strengthening of the continuity of its activities, and thereby the effectiveness of the organization.

We also welcome the close cooperation that has been consolidated between successive chairmanships since the Dublin Ministerial Council of 2012 with a view to deepening the approach taken to envisioning a Euro-Atlantic-Eurasian security community that is free, democratic, united and indivisible. The recent appointment of eight coordinators to conduct discussions is a further step towards advancing the "Helsinki+40" process.

We welcome the intention of the Swiss chairmanship to enhance cooperation between the OSCE and its partners on the ground. The OSCE plays an essential role in mediation and in dealing with and resolving conflicts, working in harmony with the United Nations and other regional organizations. That is the case in Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus, through the Minsk Group and the process of Geneva talks. That is also the case in Moldova with regard to the Transnistrian conflict. In Kosovo, the OSCE has provided indispensable support in facilitating elections in the four northern municipalities, pursuant to the First Agreement on Principles Governing Normalization of Relations between Belgrade and Pristina. In that regard, we welcome the successful holding yesterday of the initial elections towards the selection of the mayor of Mitrovica-North.

The Swiss chairmanship has rightly focused its chairmanship under the leitmotif of creating a security community for the benefit of everyone. Luxembourg shares the importance that gives to the human dimension of security. The OSCE was founded on the idea that lasting security is possible only if human rights and fundamental freedoms are respected. In that context, I would like to highlight the continuous support my country provides to the activities of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. Their independence and impartiality are at the heart of the organization.

During our chairmanship of the Forum for Security Cooperation in the past four months of 2013, Luxembourg worked to help the OSCE better respond to the challenges posed by small arms and weapons, and stocks of ammunition. We also encouraged cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations in Afghanistan, in the light of the major challenges that country must face in 2014.

I wish to assure the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE and his team that Luxembourg will spare no effort to support their efforts. In order to adhere to the goal of making this briefing more interactive, I will conclude my remarks by asking a question to the Chairperson-in-Office. He referred to the phenomenon of foreign fighters, which is of particular concern in Syria at present. In resolution 2139 (2014), which was just adopted the day before yesterday, the Security Council demanded that all foreign fighters immediately withdraw from Syria. In his veiw, what contribution can the OSCE make to fighting against the phenomenon of foreign fighters in general?

Mr. Hmoud (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting. It is my pleasure to warmly welcome the President of Switzerland, Mr. Didier Burkhalter. Allow me to congratulate him on assuming the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2014. We have full confidence in his abilities to strengthen the capacities of the organization in addressing security issues in a global framework of cooperation.

The OSCE, like its predecessor the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, has played an important and effective role in tackling the issues that represent a threat to regional stability in Europe. That helps strengthen security and stability throughout the world. There is no doubt that, without its contribution, Europe and the world would be less stable and less safe than they are today. Jordan therefore greatly appreciates the OSCE's efforts and its cooperation with the United Nations with a view to upholding the purposes and principles of the United Nations as well as the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. That will inevitably help boost collective security, in particular in the spheres of preventive diplomacy, confidence-building measures,

curbing the arms race, tackling transnational threats and in mediation, reconciliation and negotiation.

In that regard, the OSCE, as part of its three dimensions in the field of security, has optimal tools for responding to international challenges and building stability and peace. Security and peace cannot be achieved by tackling international challenges via military means alone; rather, a comprehensive approach is required, incorporating economic, social and human elements. That is at the heart of the Helsinki process and of United Nations efforts to resolve various conflicts.

Jordan, which has been a Mediterranean partner of the OSCE since 1998, attaches great importance to the role of the partnership between the OSCE and a number of Mediterranean countries with a view to strengthening the security regime in the Euro-Mediterranean region. It positively supports the pursuit of partnership in various spheres through this forum for dialogue and exchanging ideas and knowledge on regional security. Recent events in the Mediterranean region have highlighted the need to bolster and advance that cooperation in a tangible way, based on the concept of the complementarity of security in the Mediterranean and Europe.

With regard to the ongoing cooperation between the OSCE and the Afghan Government in tackling the challenges to peace and security there, we welcome the efforts deployed to complement those of the international community to strengthen democracy and stability, including through technical assistance in the organization of the upcoming local and presidential elections.

We attach particular importance to the various OSCE initiatives seeking a peaceful resolution to the crisis in Ukraine and to its efforts towards settling the crises in the Western Balkans and the South Caucasus as well as discussions on international cooperation. The OSCE has proved its ability to play a leading role in coordination with the United Nations and regional organizations, including the European Union, in resolving conflicts and in strengthening peace in the Balkans. In that respect, we welcome the efforts the OSCE has made in Kosovo in strengthening democratic institutions and in enhancing human rights and the rule of law. We commend OSCE efforts in supporting local elections in northern Kosovo. The organization's work in Kosovo, alongside to the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, as well as its role as coordinator with United Nations agencies and regional offices contributes greatly to developing cooperation with the United Nations on the ground.

There is no doubt that addressing international threats and challenges is part and parcel of the OSCE's main task, which is why it is necessary to cooperate in finding solutions with the organization to address repercussions from the dangers of climate change and natural disasters, which, along with cybercrime and the threat of weapons of mass destruction, constitute new security threats. Along with international terrorism, which remains a genuine threat in all countries of the world, those challenges require the convergence of the international community's efforts to confront the threats at different levels, including the establishment of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations such as the OSCE. We commend the Council's unanimous adoption of resolution 2133 (2014), which calls for outlawing the paying of ransom or political concessions for the release of hostages. We call upon all States to implement the resolution and to boost cooperation to put an end to that phenomenon.

In his briefing, the Chairperson-in-Office highlighted the key elements of the Swiss chairmanship of the OSCE, including respect for human rights in combating torture, which is a crime in contravention of the principles of international law. It is necessary for the international community to work to combat such actions, because human life and human dignity are at the foundation of human rights.

In conclusion, we express our support for the pursuit and intensification of cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE by coordinating international efforts and in drawing up a common strategic vision to confront common security challenges at all levels.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to very warmly welcome His Excellency Mr. Didier Burkhalter, Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and to thank him for his briefing on the priorities of his chairmanship and, above all, for the strong commitment that he has expressed to meet the challenges facing his organization.

As Mr. Burkhalter has pointed out, the OSCE is the largest regional security organization in the world, with 57 States members in Europe, North America and Asia. The OSCE has been recognized since 1992 as a regional organization under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the

United Nations. Beyond the regions it covers, the OSCE can play an important role in the settlement of conflicts that the international community faces. The priorities of the Swiss chairmanship for 2014 in the three areas covered by the organization — politico-military, economic-environmental and human — will undoubtedly contribute to improving the situation in member States confronting the challenges of insecurity and violations of human rights, whether linked to the environment or to transnational crime. The approach chosen by Chairperson-in-Office Burkhalter is intended to strengthen initiatives aimed at dialogue, transparency and prevention, whether in the area of conflict or in the environmental sphere. He would also like to make the most of mediation and solidarity, which are appropriate tools to strengthen the organization's efforts. Strengthening institutions by reforming the OSCE is also among his priorities, because he must provide the organization with an effective means to face the challenges of the day.

Opening up the OSCE to new members and civil society should contribute to bringing them together and providing a fresh impetus to the organization. Unfortunately, the OSCE will face no shortage of difficult challenges when it comes to peace, given the conflicts that have taken place recently in certain countries and regions, which is the case in Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Western Balkans, Kosovo, Nagorno Karabakh and the Southern Caucuses. The recent events that we have seen in Ukraine in recent days will be a fresh challenge to overcome.

Issues related to respect for human rights are also part of the many problems to be addressed, as is the fight against the growth of transnational crime. In that context, strengthening collaboration between the United Nations and the OSCE is of major importance. The OSCE deserves special attention from the Security Council, commensurate with the scale of the difficulties it faces. That is why we support the comments made by the Chairperson-in-Office, and we call upon the Security Council to unreservedly strengthen its cooperation with the OSCE and, in particular, with its Chairperson-in-Office in order to successfully accomplish the priorities set for the chairmanship in 2014.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Madam President, for arranging for this opportunity to have an exchange. I would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Swiss Federal Department for Foreign Affairs. I commend him on his assumption of the chairmanship-in-offfice of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). I also thank him for his briefing on the Swiss priorities during his chairmanship and on the possibilities for cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations.

Argentina appreciates the cooperation that regional and subregional organizations make to the maintenance of international peace and security. Debates such as the one we are having today enable us to reflect on the various dimensions of the links between regional and subregional organizations and the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. That is a subject to which my country attaches great importance, and we welcome the trend that we have seen in the Council to maintain dialogues of this kind. We hope this will be built upon further as a good practice and will be extended to other regional and subregional organizations on the same footing with equal treatment.

Regional and subregional organizations are key to strengthening the multilateral system. They give greater legitimacy to, and render more effective the actions of, the international community in addressing challenges to peace and in promoting dialogue and cooperation. Their contribution complements the work of the United Nations and builds on their knowledge of their own regions, as well with regard to the causes of the conflicts. Such irreplaceable comparative advantages are of great value to efforts for conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. In that context, I reiterate my country's appreciation for the important work carried out by the OSCE in the areas of early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict situations.

The cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE, characterized by its scope both in geographical terms and in content, has made it possible to achieve a more coordinated approach among various international actors. It is fitting to underscore, among other examples, OSCE cooperation with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, which has contributed to the work undertaken towards normalizing relations and advancing stability in the region.

We also believe it to be important to again underscore the close cooperation between the OSCE

and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia. Such cooperation certainly indicates the important contribution of the Regional Centre in dealing with both national issues that affect regional stability and the cross-border impact of the threat of terrorism, organized crime and drug trafficking, as well as environmental degradation and water-resource management.

With regard to Switzerland's priorities during its chairmanship, we welcome its close alignment with Serbia, which will succeed it in the OSCE chairmanship in 2015, in the context of a two-year work plan in order to ensure the continuity of activities and to increase the organization's effectiveness.

We welcome the emphasis on regional cooperation in the Western Balkans, the promotion of dialogue among the Kosovo communities and support for OSCE activities and institutions on the ground. We also welcome the dialogue and rapprochement in the Southern Caucasus through participation in the Geneva talks on regional stability with a view to promoting security and stability. We are also pleased by Switzerland's readiness to support the role of the OSCE as a platform for the exchange of ideas and conventional arms control talks in Europe.

For Argentina, based on our institutional definition of human rights as a State policy and our social culture founded on the principles, norms and practices of equality, non-discrimination, individual freedom and social justice, it is particularly appreciated that the implementation of obligations of a human dimension focused in areas such as the fight against torture, respect for human rights and the rule of law in combating terrorism, the protection of human rights defenders, the promotion of democratic elections and respect for the rights of those belonging to the various different minorities are at the heart of the Swiss chairmanship. For its part, bearing in mind the importance of cooperation in the fight against transnational threats, such as terrorism, we welcome the holding of a conference to address the response to such threats, while at the same time ensuring respect for human rights.

With regard to a topic on the Security Council agenda, as is the case with Afghanistan, we welcome the OSCE decision to send, at the request of the Government of Afghanistan, a support team for the presidential and provincial council elections that will take place in April. That decision is an important contribution to the international community's efforts to promote democracy and greater stability in the country in the context of its transition and the withdrawal of the international security forces during this year. It is proof of the positive synergies that are possible between the United Nations and the OSCE.

Finally, we appreciate the high-level dialogue proposed by Switzerland in order to advance the reform process of the OSCE in line with the mandate entrusted by the OSCE Ministerial Council to the chairmanship at the end of 2012 with a view to improving the organization's ability to act. We agree with and support the vision and the priorities set by Switzerland for the work of the OSCE this year. We highlight the emphasis on the participation of young people. We share and appreciate Switzerland's commitment towards gender equality in all decision-making processes related to inclusive and fair democracies.

We therefore trust that the Security Council and the entire United Nations system will strengthen cooperation efforts with the OSCE during the current chairmanship and with other regional and subregional organizations so as to find together the best answers to the challenges facing us in order to ensure human rights, democracy, peace and security.

I could not conclude without expressing Argentina's conviction and support because we believe that, in the situation facing Ukraine today, only dialogue, not violence, between the people and the various political and social movements in Ukraine will lead to a peaceful and democratic settlement of their differences.

Mr. Nduhungirehe (Rwanda): At the outset, I would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation and Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and thank him for his comprehensive briefing. I also congratulate his country on its assumption of the chairmanship of the OSCE for 2014.

Almost 40 years since its establishment, the role of the OSCE, through its early-warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation systems, has proved that the organization is one of the important partners of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. We also believe that such kinds of interactions with regional and subregional organizations are a good

opportunity to strengthen the implementation of the mandates of those organizations.

We note the official launch of the "Helsinki+40" project by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in January. We look forward to the completion of the OSCE strategic document in 2015, and we hope that the conclusion of that exercise will help the organization to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security in a more efficient manner.

In the meantime, I would also like to encourage the OSCE to extend its cooperation to other regional organizations, mainly in the area of experience-sharing, most especially with the African Union, an organization that is evolving into a viable and irreplaceable partner for the maintenance of peace and security on the African continent.

Allow me also to express our appreciation for the important role that the OSCE is currently playing in facilitating various processes aimed at settling the crises and conflicts in its region, especially the continued efforts of the co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group to mediate on the Nagorno Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Rwanda supports the position contained in the joint statement of the Presidents of the OSCE Minsk Group co-Chair countries, issued on 18 June 2013, which reiterates that only a negotiated settlement can lead to peace, stability and reconciliation, opening opportunities for regional development and cooperation.

Another important contribution of the OSCE that we value is its assistance in the destruction of surplus weapons left by the Cold War, especially in Ukraine and Georgia, as well as its support for arms control through its Forum for Security Cooperation. It is also very encouraging that the modernization of the Vienna Document and exchange of ideas on conventional arms control are among the priorities of the Swiss chairmanship.

In the Balkans, we commend the active contribution of the OSCE in the recent municipal elections in Kosovo, its contribution to promoting the rule of law and its continued support of the Roma and Sinti minorities.

With respect to the OSCE's efforts in combating transnational threats, I welcome the OSCE's intention to organize a conference in April on foreign fighters in other countries. I look forward to the positive outcome of the conference.

On Ukraine, we are very alarmed by the ongoing situation in that OSCE member State. The situation has proved that it has the potential to take a dangerous twist, unfortunately leading to dozens of deaths and injuries and the destruction of property. We welcome the efforts of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office to find a peaceful solution to the crisis, including by proposing the establishment of an international contact group on Ukraine and the appointment of a special envoy to that country.

We also commend Poland, Germany and France for brokering, on 21 February, the agreement on the settlement of the crisis in Ukraine between the Government and the opposition. We took note of the turn of events that followed the signing of that deal, namely, the moves by the Supreme Rada to release former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko from a prison hospital and to divest President Viktor Yanukovych. Nonetheless, we hope that all parties will implement the agreement in good faith, particularly by refraining from all kinds of violence and by putting in place a Government of national unity that will carry out the necessary constitutional and legal reforms, leading to presidential elections scheduled before the end of this year. We call on all international actors to respect the sovereignty of Ukraine and ensure that the process is Ukrainian-led and Ukrainian-owned.

Finally, I would like to express my country's support for the vision and priorities of the Swiss Chairperson of the OSCE's work this year. We look forward to continued good cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations in maintaining peace and security in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Sarki (Nigeria): We are pleased to welcome Mr. Didier Burkhalter to the Council and to congratulate him on assuming the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We thank him in particular for his very informative briefing on the OSCE's plans and priorities for 2014 and would like to wish him a very successful tenure.

The OSCE remains a key component of European security. Its importance for building strong and genuinely cooperative relationships among its 50-some States members was quite evident from the briefing we just heard. We are pleased that the OSCE is not only making noteworthy progress as a regional organization, but also enhancing cooperation with the United

Nations in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

In that regard, we commend the close cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. We appreciate the important role the OSCE is currently playing in facilitating various processes aimed at settling crises and conflicts in its region. We also welcome the high priority that the Chairperson-in-Office has placed on the agreement reached between the parties towards the settlement of the crisis in Ukraine. We believe that the implementation process will be strengthened by the support and expertise of the OSCE, and we urge that mediation, dialogue and cooperation be accorded priority in the search for an enduring solution.

We also welcome the OSCE's efforts in assisting Azerbaijan and Armenia in finding a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and we welcome the European Union-led dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. The OSCE's role in support of the dialogue is very important.

The emphasis placed on human rights, women's and civil society issues, freedom of the press and the promotion of democracy on the agenda of the OSCE deserves our encouragement and, indeed, our broad support. Challenges encountered on those cross-cutting issues underscore the need for a further increase in international corporation in order to jointly address their root causes.

Going forward, pressing challenges such as the ongoing tensions in South Ossetia, the pursuit of freedom of the press, the safety of journalists and the settlement of territorial disputes in the Southern Caucasus region present a unique opportunity to promote change in the region. We share Mr. Burkhalter's commitment to effectively cope with transnational threats to international peace and security such as human trafficking, drug trafficking and terrorism. Since transnational crimes are not limited by territorial boundaries, combating them requires complete cooperation. For that reason, we urge the OSCE to continue to create opportunities for corporation and information exchanges with regional security agencies, including the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa.

Finally, we believe that the vision that the Chairperson-in-Office has outlined ensures a very promising future for the OSCE. It is a vision that will promote regional stability and international peace and security. Such an agenda advances the work of the Security Council, and is thus deserving of our support and endorsement. But the OSCE must maintain its role in the region. It must retain its fundamental character as the most inclusive Atlantic forum for consultation and joint action.

Ms. King (Australia): I would also like to thank His Excellency President Didier Burkhalter and welcome him to the Council as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Cooperation with regional and subregional organizations clearly strengthens the United Nations efforts to maintain international peace and security, prevent conflict and restore stability in post-conflict situations. The OSCE provides welcome expertise in those areas, and close cooperation with it will assist the Council as it endeavours to fulfil its mandate.

As an Asian Partner for Cooperation with the OSCE since 2009, Australia strongly supports the OSCE's work. We welcome the 2014 OSCE priorities for fostering security and stability, improving people's lives and enhancing its own capacity to act.

With regard to territorial disputes, we welcome the OSCE's efforts to reduce tensions and engage parties in dialogue. Those efforts are crucial in helping to resolve territorial disputes such as those concerning Nagorno-Karabakh, Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

We welcome recent developments in Ukraine, which has seen moves towards peaceful dialogue — developments that were backed by calls from the OSCE for restraint from violence, resolution through dialogue and political means and respect for international humanitarian norms. Australia of course shares those views. It will be important in coming months for the OSCE to assist in ensuring that Ukraine remains able to transition to a new Government and a new Constitution and to fulfil the aspirations of the Ukrainian people. In that regard, Australia welcomes the OSCE's willingness to remain engaged and President Burkhalter's offer that the OSCE support Ukraine as an impartial witness to the implementation of agreed steps.

We commend the OSCE's recent appointment of a special representative for the Western Balkans, a region

where the OSCE has worked constructively to facilitate the recent peaceful and fair conduct of the mayoral and municipal elections in northern Kosovo, which was a key milestone in ensuring full implementation of the 19 AprilAagreement. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the special representative's efforts will be particularly important in improving the security environment in the country.

We also welcome the OSCE's continued constructive contribution to supporting Afghanistan's security and stability with an OSCE election and support team to assist with the presidential and provincial elections in April.

We are pleased the OSCE is placing priority on addressing transnational threats. We strongly support the OSCE's ongoing efforts to counter terrorism by tackling a number of emerging aspects of the terrorism threat. First, we welcome President Burkhalter's focus on kidnapping for ransom. In adopting resolution 2133 (2014) a few weeks ago, the Council sent a united message about the increase in terror- financing through kidnapping for ransom and about the role that regional organizations must play in addressing that threat. We agree with President Burkhalter that we should find a common response to that challenge, and we encourage the OSCE to use the strong framework provided by resolution 2133 (2014) to continue to strengthen awareness, capacity and cooperation among members so as to prevent the payment of ransoms to terrorists and draw on the support of the Security Council counter-terrorism entities and their expert bodies, as well as of the Global Counterterrorism Forum and its Algiers Memorandum on Good Practices.

Secondly, we support the OSCE's work on countering violent extremism and radicalization. The changing nature of the terrorism threat and the fact that it is more diffuse, with groups intent on taking advantage of social, economic and governance vulnerabilities, have driven the Security Council, and United Nations States Members more broadly, to recognize that countering violent extremist strategies is essential for preventing the spread of terrorism. The OSCE is clearly doing valuable work on that issue, in particular with its forthcoming resource on community policing. The Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee would benefit from the OSCE's sharing its work and experience in that area to reinforce the way in which the Council engages with the United Nations membership on its counter-terrorism obligations.

Thirdly, we note the OSCE's intention to address the issue of the growing trend of citizens travelling offshore to engage in or support terrorist activities or conflict. Like other members of the international community, Australia is very concerned about that, and it is important for the international community to work together in order to address the issue, including by enforcing Security Council travel bans and through effective measures to counter violent extremism.

Australia also values the important work being done by the OSCE in countering trafficking in persons, and we are pleased to have supported an OSCE programme promoting human rights protection for trafficked persons and vulnerable groups in Central Asia.

We also welcome the OSCE's intention to refocus its agenda to address the use of torture. Australia deplores the use of torture by any country and in any circumstances. We agree with President Burkhalter that regional organizations need to work to implement on-the-ground commitments undertaken in the context of the United Nations, specifically in this case by ratifying the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The international community needs to work collaboratively to eliminate the use of torture. Australia looks forward to working with the OSCE to achieve that.

President Burkhalter has given the Council a clear sense of where the OSCE and the United Nations may serve to strengthen each other's efforts. The Council should continue to work closely with the OSCE. We wish President Burkhalter every success in leading the OSCE in its important work this year.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I welcome the presence of Mr. Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation, and I congratulate his country on its accession to the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2014. The United Nations and the OSCE share common objectives, one at the global level and the other at the regional level, namely, to strengthen the links and dialogue among States to better ensure their security.

In that regard, I welcome the proposed mediation in Ukraine put forward by the Swiss Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE. All efforts must be made to end the crisis peacefully while respecting the wishes of the Ukrainian people and the legitimate interests of all stakeholders. Following the violence that has

caused such grief in Ukraine in recent days, we must support the transformations under way in that country. Institutions are being established. A new Government will soon have to organize elections as soon as possible. France and the European Union will continue their efforts to favour democratic reform and modernization in Ukraine, with full respect for its unity, integrity and independence.

The OSCE will have a major role to play. As it unites all of the States concerned by the crisis, it finds itself in a unique position to overcome the geopolitical concerns of the various parties. An artificial fault line must not again be created in Europe, as Ukraine would suffer from that by losing its role as a bridge at the heart of our continent.

I will dwell on three points regarding cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE. From Central Asia and Georgia to Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the OSCE and the United Nations have shown their capacity to work hand-in-hand. That complementarity draws on the commitment of the OSCE on the ground. Through its missions, the OSCE is present in the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Balkans, often side-by-side with the United Nations. In the Caucasus, the OSCE is working to promote dialogue and rebuild trust — indeed, the Swiss chairmanship has made that one of its priorities.

As co-chair of the Minsk Group with the United States and the Russian Federation, France has worked to help Armenia and Azerbaijan find a peaceful solution to the conflict in Nagorno Karabakh. The resumption of high-level talks between the two Presidents gives us hope for progress in the peace process.

On Georgia, France supports the Geneva talks and the role played by the OSCE together with the European Union and the United Nations, and reaffirms its support for the territorial integrity of the country. We welcome the readiness of the Swiss chairmanship of the OSCE to reopen discussions on the presence of the OSCE in Georgia on the condition that the parties show flexibility and creativity.

In Central Asia, the OSCE contributes to regional stability. Its cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in combatting crosscutting threats is an example of successful cooperation with the United Nations. The OSCE will also have a role to play in observing the presidential elections in Afghanistan scheduled for the spring.

In the Balkans, the OSCE's collaboration with the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo allowed the Kosovo electorate to participate in peaceful municipal elections in November 2013. The OSCE carried out that task with professionalism, thanks again to its substantial presence on the ground. It will once again be called upon in 2014 to facilitate the holding of a number of elections to be held in Kosovo, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Secondly, the in-depth analysis undertaken within the OSCE contributes to broader progress on security. We welcome the willingness of the Swiss chairmanship to update the 2011 Vienna Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures. Likewise, we support the intention to encourage the implementation of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, which is important for ensuring democratic oversight of security and the armed forces. Moreover, we welcome the Swiss intention to organize a number of workshops focused on transnational threats and aimed at promoting cooperation between police forces.

Finally, we endorse the priority given to promoting the upholding of commitments undertaken by participating States on human rights over the past 40 years. In that regard, we attach particular importance to the freedom of expression and media freedom.

It is a fact that the OSCE covers a vast area, stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok, that shares common values — an expanse marked by the belief that the security of the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions goes hand-in-hand with the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Those values are also at the heart of the work of the United Nations. France therefore supports the dialogue launched at the Dublin Ministerial Council on the political future of the OSCE in the context of the "Helsinki+40" process. Those reforms will allow the OSCE to continue to be a modern and effective partner for the United Nations.

France endorses the desire of the Chairperson-in-Office to strengthen the mediation capacities of the OSCE, which is a measure of its continuing commitment to work with the United Nations in seeking lasting solutions to conflicts.

I conclude by once again wishing Switzerland — and its successor, Serbia, with whom it has defined the OSCE's priorities — the greatest of success during its term in office and by assuring it of France's support.

Mr. Tatham (United Kingdom): I would like to join my colleagues in welcoming the President of the Swiss Confederation, His Excellency Mr. Didier Burkhalter, to the Council today, and to thank him for setting out his priorities as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The United Kingdom strongly supports the OSCE. As a major regional security organization in the European space, it is well-placed to complement many areas of the work of the United Nations. The strength of the OSCE's institutions means that, when the will of all its participating States is present, the OSCE can significantly contribute to the promotion of security, stability, democracy and the rule of law across its region.

I would like to express the United Kingdom's strong support for Swiss priorities in the OSCE. As Chair of the Security Committee, the United Kingdom is working closely with the OSCE chairmanship to develop many of those priorities. We welcome the focus on counter-terrorism, notably on disrupting terrorist financing, by working in support of resolution 2133 (2014) to end revenue streams obtained by kidnap for ransom. We also welcome the OSCE's continuing work in a number of other areas, not least those related to resolution 1540 (2004), on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and subsequent resolutions to encourage regional bodies to assist in implementation; resolution 2117 (2013), on small arms and light weapons, including in relation to the Arms Trade Treaty; and resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. With regard to the latter, I would like to stress the inclusion of preventing sexual violence in conflict.

We also welcome the Swiss focus this year on the Western Balkans, where the OSCE has a long-standing presence. It can add value there to the actions of the European Union and other international organizationsm — for example, through election facilitation, through intercommunity relations, on media freedom and on the rule of law. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, we have been deeply concerned by the violence that has accompanied recent protests. Those protests must be a wake-up call for all of us. There needs to be a major international effort to help strengthen Bosnia and Herzegovina's institutions and its territorial integrity. The OSCE will undoubtedly have a role in that effort.

An important focus for the international community, including the OSCE, is the current situation in Ukraine, which has seen serious violence and dramatic developments in recent days. That violence has led to the deaths of more than 80 people and left more than 600 injured. Such horrific scenes have no place in twenty-first century Europe. Our condolences go out to the families of all those who lost their lives, and our sympathies to go those injured.

Events have been moving swiftly in Ukraine, as Yanukovych has left Kiev. In his absence, the Ukrainian Parliament has voted in a series of decrees by large majorities, the details of which were circulated to Council members this morning in a letter from the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations. They include the formation of a unity Government. That Government must now move rapidly to build a stable, inclusive and fair political system and work to fulfil the aspirations of the people of Ukraine. They must create the conditions that will allow for free and fair elections in May and ensure accountability for the serious human rights violations and acts of violence that we have witnessed during the past three months. We hope the Government will call on the undoubted expertise of the OSCE. Free and fair elections are crucial for rebuilding the confidence of Ukrainians and avoiding future tension.

We would like to pay tribute to the work of the OSCE in Ukraine. Last December's OSCE Ministerial Council took place in Kiev against a backdrop of large-scale public protests. Since then, the OSCE has played a positive role in efforts to support a peaceful solution through the good offices of the OSCE for mediation. We welcome the announcement that Mr. Burkhalter has appointed the respected Swiss diplomat Tim Guldimann as his personal envoy to Ukraine.

The United Kingdom is committed to supporting a stable, united and economically prosperous Ukraine. The role of the international community must be to allow ordinary Ukrainians to decide their future. That is not a zero-sum game. All in the international community want a stable and prosperous Ukraine. We all now need to work together help restore stability and protect Ukraine's economy.

I again thank Mr. Burkhalter for his presentation today. The United Kingdom will continue working closely with him and his team in Vienna to ensure that our shared vision for the OSCE as a forum for dialogue and cooperation across an often divided region can be advanced during 2014.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): I, too, would like to welcome the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Chairperson-in-Office, President Didier Burkhalter, to the Security Council and to thank him for today's briefing on OSCE activities under Swiss leadership.

We commend the Chairperson-in-Office for his efforts to promote security and stability, strengthen the OSCE's capacity to combat transnational threats, address protracted conflicts, ensure security after natural disasters and advance human rights and fundamental freedoms. We also commend Chairperson-in-Office Burkhalter's continued engagement on Ukraine and note that he has repeatedly confirmed the OSCE's readiness to assist Ukraine in securing a peaceful way forward.

The United States is closely monitoring developments in Ukraine. We have consistently advocated a de-escalation of violence, constitutional change, a coalition Government and early elections. The unshakable principle guiding events must be that the people of Ukraine determine their own future. We welcome constructive work in the Supreme Rada and continue to urge the prompt formation of a broad, technocratic Government of national unity. Going forward, we will work with other States in appropriate European and international organizations to support a strong, prosperous, united and democratic Ukraine. We urge Ukrainian authorities to seize the opportunities for OSCE assistance, including offers from the Chairperson-in-Office, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the OSCE Representative on the Freedom of the Media for mediation, fact-finding missions, election monitoring, legislative review or other assistance. Welcoming those measures without delay would provide transparency to citizens in desperate need of answers and accountability.

The United Nations-OSCE agenda is ambitious and robust, with the two organizations working together on a wide range of issues, from counter-terrorism and counter-trafficking to early warning and conflict settlement to democratization and good governance. The memorandum of understanding between the OSCE and the United Nations on joint projects to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime-OSCE joint action plan to address transnational threats represent two concrete examples of the organizations' work together to tackle key issues of global importance. We look forward to the full implementation of those agreements.

The United States views the OSCE as a strong partner in international counter-terrorism efforts. The organization has strengthened counter-terrorism capacities by conducting training programmes that promote norms and standards of responsible State behaviour, by sharing and helping to implement best practices and by providing assistance to participating States as they develop human-rights-compliant counter-terrorism policies. The OSCE has led efforts to examine the role of women's empowerment in countering violent extremism through a series of expert round tables, most recently at the International Symposium on Terrorism and Transnational Crime held in Turkey in December. We welcome the OSCE's deepened collaboration with the Global Counterterrorism Forum, established by the United States and other concerned Governments, with a core mission to promote the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-terrorism Strategy.

Good relations between neighbours is a vital indication that our shared objective of cooperative, indivisible security is being realized. We therefore encourage the Chairperson-in-Office's Special Representative for the Western Balkans, Ambassador Stoudmann, to be ambitious in his efforts to promote reconciliation and cooperation in the region. We have already seen encouraging progress in Kosovo, where the OSCE has been instrumental in helping to implement the historic 19 April Agreement between Belgrade and Pristina, in particular through the facilitation of local elections in northern Kosovo.

We welcome the OSCE's long-standing commitment and leadership in trying to find solutions to Europe's protracted conflicts. The international community should not allow the status quo in Georgia or in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict or in the Transdniestrian conflict to persist. The two special representatives for the Southern Caucuses and Moldova, respectively, whom the Chairperson-in-Office jointly appointed with Serbia, should assist the parties in those conflicts to identify and implement steps that will promote peaceful settlements.

Outside its region, the OSCE provides expertise that benefits Asian and Mediterranean partner countries. The OSCE Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe, for example, provides specialized training for border security agencies from across Central Asia, the wider OSCE region and Afghanistan.

The United States strongly supports the OSCE's special relationship with Afghanistan, an OSCE Partner for Cooperation, and values the OSCE's continued active engagement during this crucial year of transition. The organization's work in Afghanistan complements the United Nations own efforts, including its support for the country's upcoming elections. Credible, transparent and inclusive elections are critical to Afghanistan's stability and democratic development. For that reason, the United States has contributed approximately $2 million to the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights for the deployment of an election support team in Afghanistan. We would welcome additional contributions to the team from OSCE participating and partner States.

In the area of human rights, we share the Chairperson-in-Office's focus on implementing the OSCE's existing commitments in the human dimension. The OSCE is a premier organization in the protection of human rights, the promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination, the advancement of gender equality and support for citizens' rights to exercise their fundamental freedoms of assembly, association, expression and belief. We welcome the Chairperson-in-Office's goals to work closely with civil society counterparts and to strengthen OSCE efforts to ensure that participating States uphold their human dimension commitments.

The United States is an active member of the OSCE, and we remain fully committed to its important work. The continued and renewed dialogue and collective efforts of the OSCE and its participating States remain as important as ever, and we welcome such goals and actions in coordination with the United Nations.

Mr. Shen Bo (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China appreciates Lithuania's initiative in organizing this briefing on the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and would like to thank Mr. Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation and Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, for attending today's meeting. We have listened very carefully to his briefing.

As an important regional organization, the OSCE has over the years made a positive contribution to efforts to conduct preventive diplomacy, enhance security and mutual trust, mediate regional disputes and combat terrorism and crime. China appreciates those efforts, and we listened carefully to the three priorities presented by Mr. Burkhalter for the Swiss chairmanship. We encourage the OSCE to continue to fully exploit its advantages, to settle disputes through peaceful means, such as mediation and good offices, and to play a positive and constructive role in maintaining regional peace, security and stability.

Under the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. China supports the efforts of the United Nations, including the Security Council, in line with Chapter VIII of the Charter, to enhance its cooperation with regional and subregional organizations. Such cooperation should strive to maintain strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the basic norms of international relations, in particular the principles of respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs. The United Nations and regional and subregional organizations should capitalize on their respective advantages and enhance their complementarity and coordination.

China supports cooperation between the United Nations, the Security Council and the OSCE in maintaining regional peace and stability. We hope that the channels of cooperation will be expanded and approaches diversified, so as to achieve pragmatic and effective cooperation, thereby jointly contributing to international and regional peace, stability and development.

China has followed the political situation in Ukraine very closely. We hope that all parties will continue to settle their disputes and differences peacefully and lawfully through political consultation and that political stability is achieved and order restored as soon as possible. China hopes that the international community will continue to make positive efforts and play a constructive role in achieving stability in the situation in Ukraine. We respect the choice made by the Ukrainian people on the basis of national conditions. We are ready to continue to develop a strategic partnership with Ukraine on the basis of peace and mutual benefit.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are pleased to welcome the President of Switzerland to the Security Council in his capacity as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We thank him for his comprehensive briefing.

The Russian Federation has consistently supported developing and improving cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional mechanisms on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular Chapter VIII. Cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE should be rest on that same foundation.

Cooperation between the two organizations is regular and multilateral in nature. It covers all aspects of security, as well as cross-dimensional issues. The OSCE complements the work of the United Nations and facilitates the implementation of mechanisms agreed at the global level in its area of regional responsibility and as part of its mandate.

Russia intends to cooperate constructively with the Swiss Chairperson-in-Office, who, we trust, will implement a balanced course in the interests of all Member States. In general, we support the Chairperson-in-Office's three priorities for 2014, namely, strengthening security and stability, improving people's lives and reinforcing the capacities of the OSCE. The programme of work in those three OSCE dimensions appears to be balanced, covering the military, political, economic, environmental and humanitarian spheres.

We note the willingness of the Chairperson-in-Office to take into account Russian priorities and approaches, including combating transnational threats such as terrorism and drug trafficking, protecting the rights of national minorities, supporting traditional values and combating neo-Nazism and extremism, as well as OSCE reform, including rationalizing the election monitoring work carried out by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

In the context of providing regional stability and removing existing dividing lines, we think that the OSCE could be called upon to harmonize integration processes in Western and Eastern Europe and to ensure freedom of movement, including the streamlining of visa regimes, particularly as the OSCE was originally established to remove such dividing lines.

As part of the "Helsinki+40" process, in particular with a view to ensuring the development of European cooperation and security principles and to adapting the OSCE to the challenges of the twenty-first century, we reaffirm our readiness to consider the possibility of organizing an OSCE summit in 2015, if substantial results in those areas are achieved.

We support developing the interaction between the United Nations and the OSCE on the basis of the 2006 declaration on cooperation. We believe that the OSCE, bearing in mind the coordinating role of the United Nations, can make a significant contribution to international efforts to ensure peace and security in its area of responsibility. In our view, the greatest potential is for cooperation on combating transnational threats, international terrorism, organized crime and illegal drug trafficking. We note the high level of practical interaction between the OSCE secretariat's transnational threats department and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Their joint initiatives are yielding concrete results.

In our view, at the heart of the cooperation in that area should be efforts to combine the comparative advantages of each organization, namely, the regional format of the OSCE and the global capacities of the United Nations, thereby avoiding duplication and wasting resources, in particular in regions where both organizations are very active. That is the case, for example, in Central Asia. The priority areas for cooperation are well known: combating drug trafficking and the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons, cooperation on implementing resolution 1540 (2004) and fighting terrorism, organized crime, corruption, money laundering, human trafficking and illegal migration.

It is clear that the added value of the OSCE lies also in its ability to tackle humanitarian issues, including combating human trafficking and illegal migration and encouraging tolerance and inter-civilizational dialogue. It can also help to combat xenophobia and discrimination, in particular in terms of ensuring the rights of national, religious and language minorities, which, as we know, is a particularly serious problem in a number of European countries.

We note the prospects for cooperation on a relatively new track for the OSCE, namely, developing confidence-building measures and using information and communications technologies, where the Vienna-based organization complements global United Nations efforts in the area of international information security.

At the same time, we are alarmed by attempts to introduce into OSCE practice monitoring mechanisms similar to those set up at the United Nations and to implement, through the OSCE, non-consensual documents of the General Assembly and the Human

Rights Council. We are concerned about the intention of some countries to incorporate concepts derived from resolution 1325 (2000) into the work of the OSCE, despite the absence of armed conflict in its territory.

Moreover, United Nations-OSCE cooperation does not cover a large number of important problems where there is significant room for increased cooperation, including ensuring the rights of children, which is an area in which the United Nations has extensive experience. Another such area is protecting traditional values, which is a subject under consideration by the Human Rights Council.

The situation in Ukraine was mentioned in the briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office and in a number of other statements we heard today, but it is still not clear how violent, non-constitutional regime change in that country is consistent with OSCE principles, or indeed the rule of law, which is such a fashionable subject to speak about in the Council.

The OSCE Chairperson-in-Office spoke approvingly of the 21 February agreement, which was signed by a number of representatives, such as the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Poland and France, and allegedly by the representative of the Russian Federation. I would like to make it clear that the Russian representative to the talks on that agreement did not sign it. There were misgivings that the 21 February agreement would serve only as a smokescreen for subsequent unconstitutional action, and that is indeed what transpired.

I would now like to share with the participants in today's Security Council meeting a bit of the text of the statement released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation with regard to the situation in Ukraine. The Russian Federation is seriously concerned by developments in Ukraine. The 21 February agreement is not being implemented, despite the fact that its signing was witnessed by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Poland and France. The United States, the European Union and other international organizations welcomed that document. The rioting militants have not been disarmed. They refuse to leave the streets of the city, which they are effectively in control of, or to leave administrative buildings. Their acts of violence continue.

We are surprised that a number of European politicians have already been quick to state that presidential elections will be held in Ukraine in May, although the 21 February agreement provides that elections should take place only after the conclusion of constitutional reform. It is clear that, for the success of that reform, all political forces in Ukraine from all regions of the country must take part, and its results should be put to a referendum. We believe in the need to fully reflect the concerns of deputies from the eastern and southern parts of Ukraine, Crimea and Sevastopol, which were presented at the meeting in Krakow, Poland, on 22 February.

We are particularly concerned about the legitimacy of the actions being taken by the Ukrainian Supreme Rada. Basing their actions merely on simple revolutionary expediency, they are issuing so-called decisions and laws there, including some geared towards infringing on the humanitarian rights of Russian and other national minorities living in Ukraine. There have been calls for a virtual ban on the Russian language, the impeachment of leaders, the dissolution of parties and organizations, the closing of certain unwelcome media stations and the lifting of restrictions on neo-Nazi propaganda. There is a policy of muzzling dissidents in various regions of Ukraine through dictatorial and sometimes terrorist methods. There are now threats being made against Orthodox shrines. National radicals continue to vandalize memorials in various cities in Ukraine and, in some European capitals, their supporters have been vandalizing memorials to Soviet troops. Such events are undermining the 21 February agreement. They discredit its initiators and guarantors and pose a threat to civil peace. the stability of society and civil security.

We must note that we see no concern, in the position of several of our Western partners, for the fate of Ukraine, but rather a unilateral geopolitical agenda. We hear no principled condemnation of the acts of extremists, including of neo-Nazi and anti-Semitic manifestations. Furthermore, whether deliberately or not, such actions are being further encouraged.

We get the lasting impression that the 21 February agreement, with the tacit consent of its foreign sponsors, is being used as a smokescreen for promoting forced regime change in Ukraine by creating facts on the ground, without any kind of wish to seek out a common Ukrainian consensus that is in the interest of national reconciliation. We are particularly concerned by attempts to get international structures, including the United Nations Secretariat, to support that line of reasoning.

We call on all parties in the crisis in Ukraine to show maximum responsibility, not allow any further deterioration in the situation, return the situation to the legal track and crack down on the activities of all extremists.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Lithuania.

I warmly welcome the President of the Swiss Confederation in his capacity as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and thank him for his extensive briefing earlier today.

The body that he is chairing is the largest regional security organization partnering with the United Nations. It is unique in its comprehensive approach to security and has respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms at its core, in which participating States engage in open debate on pressing security challenges and constantly review the state of implementation of their commitments.

Let me express Lithuania's appreciation for the Swiss priorities of the OSCE chairmanship, which focus on fostering security and stability, implementing OSCE commitments and strengthening the OSCE's capacity to act. The OSCE remains a strong United Nations partner under Chapter VIII of the Charter.

We look forward to the Swiss OSCE chairmanship's initiative to organize a conference devoted to strengthening cooperation between the OSCE, the United Nations and other international organizations, with a particular focus on the human dimension.

Important cases of cooperation between the United Nations, the OSCE, and the European Union include their coordinated response and actions during the crisis in Kyrgyzstan in 2010 and a contribution to security and stability in Kosovo.

The international discussions in Geneva to address the consequences of the 2008 war in Georgia offer a good example of OSCE-United Nations cooperation in the field of mediation. Those efforts could be strengthened by the OSCE and the United Nations presence on the ground throughout Georgia.

Dramatic events are evolving before our eyes in Ukraine, and the most recent breathtaking democratic changes are an impressive reminder that it is not possible to ignore people's striving for freedom, democracy, human dignity and justice. Political power that disregards the will and expectations of the vast majority of its citizens and is concerned only with its own egoistic interests loses democratic legitimacy and the trust of its people and is not sustainable.

Lithuania welcomes the ongoing democratic change in Ukraine and the determined leadership of the Supreme Rada in that historic process. We hope that it will open the door to a quick and peaceful resolution of the political crisis, which was created by the former Government and President Yanukovych. We welcome the adoption of new decrees and other decisions in Kyiv in the past few days, which seek to introduce a new constitutional framework, consolidate the foundations for a comprehensive legal reform and resolve the remaining issues of selective justice.

Lithuania remains firmly committed to supporting Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, as well as Ukraine's European integration. We believe that the OSCE, and in particular the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, have an important role to play in the process of preparing for new elections in Ukraine.

The Vilnius OSCE Ministerial Council of 2011 took a decision on the conflict cycle, equipping the OSCE with the necessary tools for the prevention of, and response to, conflicts. That asset should not be wasted. The political will to use those tools remains essential.

We welcome the OSCE's focus on addressing transnational threats. Cybersecurity threats have been on the rise, and we welcome the pioneering work by the OSCE on cybersecurity confidence-building measures at the regional level and would support a discussion on the possibility of applying that approach beyond the OSCE.

The OSCE is also at the forefront of implementing the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, especially in assisting participating States in the development of relevant legislation. The OSCE should further facilitate cooperation between Central Asian States and Afghanistan, especially in the area of border management, including through the OSCE Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe.

Energy security has direct linkages to the independence of economic and political action in international affairs and has a direct effect on national security, development and prosperity. We note the

complementary role of the OSCE in promoting energy security dialogue in line with closer cooperation with the United Nations.

Emerging regional challenges related to the use of natural resources, including water, also merit the OSCE's attention. We would appreciate the views of the Chairperson-in-Office on how the OSCE and the United Nations could best address issues related to inland water resources in Central Asia.

There cannot be lasting security and stability without respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Lithuania consistently supports the work of the independent OSCE institutions relating to the implementation of OSCE human rights commitments. One particular area where the OSCE needs to maintain continuous engagement is freedom of expression and media freedom. Also, the implementation of resolution 1738 (2006), on the protection of journalists, remains essential.

Women's full and equal exercise of their human rights is essential to achieving a more peaceful, secure and democratic OSCE zone. The appointment of gender focal points in field operations and departments of the OSCE and the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality are essential. The work of OSCE field presences in Central Asia across all three dimensions deserves special attention, especially in the area of democratic reforms and human rights. Those activities are relevant and should be continued.

To conclude, let me assure the Swiss Chairperson-in-Office of Lithuania's continued support for his work and the priorities of his chairmanship. Lithuania will also continue supporting the OSCE role in the realization of a free, democratic, common and indivisible security community, in line with the principles and commitments enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to Mr. Burkhalter to respond to the comments and questions raised.

Mr. Burkhalter: First of all, I would like to thank all of those who have tried to pronounce my name as well as possible. They did pronounce my first name perfectly, and that is fair enough.

More seriously, I would to thank all speakers for their thoughtful interventions and, above all, for having clearly supported the priorities of the Swiss chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). I see once again how very useful it is to have a one-page summary table of our priorities. For me, it was a clear image of support of my priorities as Chairperson-in-Office, which is very important to me. The support of the Council is of the utmost importance because we want to hold consultations throughout the year with all of our partners and all members of the Council.

I will not respond now to all the statements, but I would like to say that Council members should rest assured that we will integrate their points of view into our work as its progresses throughout our term in office.

I want to focus briefly on some of the questions and make some remarks on some issues and priorities I did not touch upon during my statement earlier. I will then conclude with a political message I would like to send at the end of the meeting.

There was in fact only one formal question, unless I am mistaken.

(*spoke in French*)

That question was from Luxembourg. I thank the representative of Luxembourg for her question. What contribution can the OSCE make in the fight against foreign fighters? I think that, in general, it must be said that what we need to do is to reduce as much as possible the causes of extremism in countries of origin. Primarily, we must act to reduce as much as possible the fertile ground in which extremism can grow. In addition, we must also step up reintegration activities for such individuals. Specifically for the OSCE, that means doing every possible to promote cooperation among security services, the exchange of good practices, research and the fight against terrorism financing.

(*spoke in English*)

I would also like to respond positively to the Nigerian suggestion on the same issue of enhancing cooperation and coordination among regional organizations — such as between the OSCE and the African Union.

With regard to the issues I did not mention earlier that members brought up, I wish to say to Jordan, first of all, that we are fully aware of the Mediterranean partnership of the OSCE; indeed, we would like to make links between our priorities and that partnership. A concrete example is the issue of kidnapping for ransom:

we will try, with the Mediterranean partnership, to make progress on that issue.

To France, Chile and others, I would like to say that, although I did not mention the issues of conventional arms control and the modernization of the Vienna Document, they are very important to us. We must be realistic. We know that we will not be able to move forward very rapidly on such issues, but we do want to engage in dialogue on conventional arms control and want to modernize the Vienna Document.

As for the final political messages I would like to send during today's meeting, there are four. First, I would like to say that, in our globalized world, there is greater need for regional organization for security. The conception of the OSCE is useful for the twenty-first century. What we need is the capacity to enhance confidence and to act. The OSCE has the capacity to enhance confidence because it is a platform for dialogue and acts as a common roof for the 57 participating States, meaning we can try to reduce lines of division in this area. In terms of our capacity for action, the OSCE brings a comprehensive security conception — a multidimensional approach that is so important today. It is a major asset that should even be exported to other regions. Furthermore, with regard to the capacity to act, I would like to recall our action on the ground — the fact that the OSCE is a field-based organization, and that is very important.

The second message is the fact that the Swiss chairmanship is fully committed to strengthening the cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE, as well as with other regional organizations. There is great potential in particular in the field of mediation support and training.

The third message is that our chairmanship wants most seriously to build bridges between East and West. I would like to thank all of the members of the Council for their constructive reactions to what I said about Ukraine, our proposal to establish an international contact grou, and our decisions to send a special envoy and core group for a needs assessment mission, and to prepare potential human rights and election observation missions, in case the Ukrainian authorities make such a request, as we hope they will.

In addition to the measures on Ukraine I mentioned in my statement and have just recalled, based on the statements made today, I think that the involvement of another important OSCE institution — the High Commissioner on National Minorities — should be involved. The High Commission works with a conflict-prevention mandate and could help defuse tension in the eastern part of the country and in Crimea.

The last message I would like to send today is the fact that the chairmanship wants to work for and with the people, and above all for and with young people. We regard it as a key task of politics to provide good prospects for the generations to come, and we have high expectations of the 57 youth ambassadors of the model OSCE in negotiation of a youth action plan.

Let me conclude by stating that Switzerland highly values the United Nations, we remain fully committed to the objectives of the United Nations and we are determined to support its efforts to advance peace and security, which are also the basis of the Swiss Constitution.

The President: I thank Mr. Burkhalter for the additional comments he has just made.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.